

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 OMB-01
/067 W

-----080937 192111Z /20

R 181610Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4294
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMEMBASSY BONN
DIA WASHDC
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
SHAPEUSNR
USCINCEUR, VAHINGEN, GERMANY
USDOCOSOUTH
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 13247

USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF
SHAPEUSNR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: ALESSANDRO PERTINI, SEVENTH PRESIDENT OF ITALY

1. ALESSANDRO PERTINI, ELECTED ON JULY 8 AS ITALY'S SEVENTH
PRESIDENT, IS A MAN WITH AN ADMIRABLE PAST, IMPECCABLE MORAL
STANDARDS AND UNSHAKABLE LIBERAL IDEALS. HE IS ALSO HIGHLY
EMOTIONAL, STUBBORN, POLITICALLY NARROW-MINDED, AND POORLY
INFORMED ON WORLD AFFAIRS. HE HAS A RECORD OF UNFRIENDLI-
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NESS TO THE UNITED STATES AND OF HOSTILITY TO THE SOVIET
UNION. HIS INTELLECT IS ALREADY AFFECTED BY ADVANCING AGE.
NO ONE IS QUOTE CERTAIN HOW HE WILL ACT AS PRESIDENT.

2. TO GIVE A PRELIMINARY IMPRESSION OF THE MAN, WE
ARE SUBMITTING IN THE FIVE SUBSEQUENT TELEGRAMS THE IN-
FORMATION AND JUDGEMENTS REGARDING PERTINI WHICH WE

HAVE GATHERED IN THE PAST WEEK:

- PERTINI: HIS RECORD SETS OUT THE ESSENTIAL FACTS OF PERTINI'S LIFE.
- PERTINI: THE MANA SUMMARIZES PERTINI'S OUTSTANDING TRAITS OF CHARACTER, HIS LIMITATIONS AND HIS PRIVATE INTERESTS.
- PERTINI: THE POLITICIAN DESCRIBES PERTINI'S POLITICAL VIEWS, HIS TROUBLED RELATIONS WITH HIS OWN PARTY AND HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE COMMUNIST PARTY. IN THE CASE OF THE PCI, IT IS CLEAR THAT DESPITE HIS CLOSENESS TO CERTAIN COMMUNIST LEADERS, PERTINI IS DISTANT FROM THE PARTY.
- PERTINI: THE FOREIGN POLICY IDEALIST DESCRIBES PERTINI'S CONTINUING CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HIS DIMINISHING NEUTRALISM. IT POINTS OUT THAT PERTINI HAS BEEN UNFRIENDLY TO THE UNITED STATES IN THE PAST, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE OF HIS BELIEF THAT THE UNITED STATES SUPPORTS RIGHT-WING GOVERNMENTS AND AS A RESULT OF AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN VIETNAM. IT CITES PERTINI'S HOSTILITY TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION, BOTH BECAUSE OF ITS POLITICAL SYSTEM AND ITS FOREIGN POLICY.
- PERTINI: THE PRESIDENT DISCUSSES HOW PERTINI MAY CONDUCT HIMSELF IN OFFICE.

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3. THE MATERIAL AND ASSESSMENT IN THESE FIVE TELEGRAMS ARE BASED PRIMARILY ON EMBASSY CONTACTS, SUPPLEMENTED BY PRESS REPORTS AND A LONG INTERVIEW OF PERTINI BY ORIANA FALLACI IN L'EUROPEO ON DECEMBER 27, 1973. THE FALLACI INTERVIEW HAS BEEN DESCRIBED BY A LIFE-LONG FRIEND OF PERTINI AS CONVEYING A GENERALLY BALANCED AND ACCURATE VIEW OF PERTINI'S OUTLOOK. IT DESERVES MENTION THAT TWO SENTENCES IN PRESIDENT PERTINI'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS--THOSE ABOUT LIBERTY--ARE NEARLY VERBATIM THE SAME AS THOSE IN THE FALLACI INTERVIEW.

4. PERTINI ENTERS OFFICE AT A TIME OF UNPRECEDENTED UNCERTAINTY AND DELICACY IN ITALIAN POLITICS. THE PRESIDENCY IS ONE WHOSE POWERS AND INFLUENCE ARE NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR. BOTH THE INSTITUTION AND THE MAN MAY FIND THEMSELVES TESTED TO THE UTMOST IN THE COMING SEVEN YEARS. GARDNER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ROME13247
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780296-1104
Format: TEL
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780747/aaaabnwi.tel
Line Count: 111
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 27285171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1969739
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALESSANDRO PERTINI, SEVENTH PRESIDENT OF ITALY
TAGS: PINT, IT, (PERTINI, ALESSANDRO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/27285171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014